

Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
286 Water Street
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel: (207) 287-2070; Fax: (207) 287-4172
TTY: 1-800-606-0215

October 2009

Subsurface Wastewater Program Strengthened by Merger with Water Resources Group at Maine CDC

Dear Site Evaluators, Code Enforcement Officers, Local Plumbing Inspectors, Town Clerks, State Agencies and others:

I am pleased to announce that the State's Subsurface Wastewater Program has merged with the Drinking Water Program's Water Resources group. This alliance makes sense for many reasons. For decades both groups have been working side by side to prevent contamination of our ground and surface water resources that harms human health. This physical merger will amplify and better utilize the technical strengths and experience of the two individual programs. A priority is to provide consistent and timely interpretations of the Subsurface Wastewater Rules.

Further integrating the Division of Environmental Health's five Programs has been a long-term goal and one which we are steadily achieving. Russ Martin's retirement this summer from state service as the Director of the Subsurface Wastewater Program presented an opportunity to make this long anticipated piece of the integration happen. Necessity also played a role. Permit revenues have decreased significantly over the past few years. Revenues have not come close to meeting expenses for several years now. The sole source of funding for the Program is 25% of all permit revenues received by municipalities. It is more critical than ever to work smarter and reduce redundancies and inefficiencies wherever possible.

For the benefit of the many state agency staff, municipal officials and licensed professionals working in the subsurface wastewater disposal arena, I have highlighted below the four primary areas where we will continue to focus our attention.

Rulemaking and the Administration and Interpretation of Existing Rules:

- Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules;
- Rules for Site Evaluators of Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Systems; and
- Rules for Appointment and Administration of Local Plumbing Inspectors

Project Reviews and Registrations:

- First Time System and Replacement System Variances;
- Minimum Lot Size Variances;
- Engineered Disposal Systems;
- Product Approvals;
- Health Inspection Establishment reviews;
- Public Swimming Pools and Spas; and
- Private Cemeteries and Crematories.

Site Evaluator Licensing:

- Review of License Applications;
- Administration of Written and Field Exams;
- Issuance of Licenses to Qualified Individuals;
- Training;
- Investigation of Complaints Filed against LSEs;
- Issuance of License Renewals; and
- Technical Assistance.

Local Plumbing Inspectors:

- Periodic Review of Municipal Inspection Programs;
- Temporary Authorizations to Municipalities to hire non-certified Plumbing Inspectors;
- Appointment of LPIs in Unorganized Townships;
- Permitting and Construction Inspections in the Unorganized Townships when no LPI can be appointed;
- Technical and Administrative Support;
- Annual Training in coordination with JETCC and the State Planning Office; and
- Referral of Complaints to the LPI or Local Health Officer.


The Subsurface Wastewater Program's technical staff, Douglas Coombs LSE, PLS, CPE, James Jacobsen, and Brent Lawson LPI, LSE, Master Plumber, will function as a technical unit of the Water Resources Team led by Andy Tolman C.G., and supported by David Braley C.G., Terry Trott, Sara Lippert, and Jennifer Donnell. Wendy Austin and Lorraine Martin will continue to provide administrative support to the Subsurface Wastewater Unit.

Over the next months we will be working closely with Towns and other state agencies whose responsibilities include wastewater and the environment, including the State Planning Office, Department of Marine Resources, Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources.

There is a new revision of the Subsurface Wastewater Rules that recently went into effect, and some of the changes appear to result in some confusion. We are working on identifying these areas and will be providing guidance on interpretation and application of the new provisions very soon. David Braley will be providing coordination and leadership to the Subsurface Wastewater Unit.

We are excited about this merger and believe that this change will allow us to improve our performance and apply the subsurface wastewater laws and rules in a consistent, timely and dependable manner. Please call me at 287-5674 or email me at nancy.beardsley@maine.gov with your thoughts.

Yours truly for public health protection,



Nancy Beardsley, Director
Division of Environmental Health